

**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Montpelier, Vermont**

TEAM: Commissioner's Office

ITEM: Will the State Board find that the formation of the Addison Northwest Unified Union School District is in the best interests of the students, the state, and the school districts involved and therefore vote to approve the attached report of the Addison Northwest Supervisory Union Unified Union School District Planning Committee, as agreed upon October 6, 2009?

RECOMMENDED ACTION: That the State Board find that the formation of the Addison Northwest Unified Union School District is in the best interests of the students, the state, and the school districts involved and therefore vote to approve the attached report of the Addison Northwest Supervisory Union Unified Union School District Planning Committee, as agreed upon October 6, 2009.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY: 16 V.S.A. §706c

BACKGROUND INFORMATION: The Addison Northwest Supervisory Union comprises five town/city school districts (Addison, Ferrisburgh, Panton, Vergennes and Waltham) and two union school districts (Vergennes Union Elementary School District #44 comprising the member districts of Panton, Vergennes and Waltham; and the Vergennes Union High School District #5 comprising the member districts of Addison, Ferrisburgh, Panton, Vergennes and Waltham). The formation of a unified union district would result in the elimination of all the above school districts and create a single entity with one common board and administration. The newly-formed district would be more efficient and economical and would provide the students with a fuller and more coordinated array of alternatives for their K-12 education. The final report of the Planning Committee is attached.

STAFF AVAILABLE: Armando Vilaseca; Mark Oettinger

**Addison Northwest Supervisory Union
Unified Union School District
Planning Committee Report**

October 6, 2009

Authorization to engage in this Unified Union Planning Committee process was voted in the affirmative by the Addison Northwest SU Board of Directors on May 27, 2009.

Commissioner of Education, Armando Vilaseca, was advised of the formation of this Unified Union School District Study Committee pursuant to Title 16 V.S.A., Section 706b by letter dated September 8, 2009. Ms. Kristin Bristow was identified as chairperson of the Unified Union School District Planning Committee through this same letter.

Recommended Articles of Agreement, pursuant to the requirements of Title 16, V.S.A., Section 706b were agreed upon by the Planning Committee at its duly warned meeting of October 6, 2009.

The voters in each of the "necessary town school districts" will vote on whether or not to form a Unified Union School District on March 2, 2010.

School Planning Committee Members:

Kristin Bristow, Chairperson
Laurie Gutowski
Adela Langrock
Don Jochum
Cheryl Brinkman
Jeff Glassberg
Jamie Dayton

Thomas O'Brien, Superintendent of Schools, ANWSU
Wayne Howe, Principal, Addison Central School
Kathleen Cannon, Business Manager, ANWSU

Articles of Agreement

The ANWSU Planning Committee recommends the following Articles of Agreement to be adopted by the respective school districts for the creation of a Unified Union School District to be named Addison Northwest Unified Union School District.

Article #1

The School Districts of Addison, Ferrisburgh, Panton, Vergennes and Waltham are necessary to the establishment of the Addison Northwest Unified Union School District.

Article #2

The member school districts of the Addison Northwest Supervisory Union have worked collaboratively for many years to consolidate management and educational services, master employee contracts and to otherwise bring about effective and efficient operating procedures and practices. Numerous formal agreements, management systems and operating procedures are currently in place for these member school districts. Therefore, no additional school districts beyond those identified in Article I are being recommended at this time.

Article #3

The Unified Union School District will offer education to students in Kindergarten through Grade Twelve, and will offer Pre-K education as determined by the Unified Union School Board.

Article #4

No new school buildings are necessary to or proposed for the formation of the Unified Union School District. The Unified Union School Board will operate existing school facilities in Vergennes, Addison and Ferrisburgh commencing July 1, 2011. The Unified Union School Board, as soon as possible following July 1, 2011, will address unmet facility needs. To the extent that any of the necessary School Districts as identified in Article I incur capital debt in the period prior to June 30, 2011, any unpaid debt arising therefrom will be assumed by the Unified Union School District.

Article #5 a

Beginning July 1, 2011, the Unified Union School District will be responsible for providing or contracting for any transportation to public school students living within the boundaries of this Unified Union School District in accordance with transportation policies adopted by the Unified Union School Board.

Article #5 b

The Unified Union School District will honor all master contracts that are in place for the member school districts on June 30, 2011. These master agreements will continue until their specified termination date. Subsequent master contracts will be subject to legal and agreed upon bargaining procedures.

Article #5 c

All administrators, teachers and staff, employed by the member school districts and supervisory union at the time of the formation of this Unified Union School District may, at their discretion, continue in their employment during the first year (2011-2012) of operating the proposed Unified Union School District. Subsequent personnel contracts will be the responsibility of the Unified Union School Board. All personnel employed by the Unified Union School District shall meet State of Vermont educator licensing requirements and will be subject to Title 16, Section 1752(c).

Article #5 d

Beyond the first transition year (2010-2011), the new Unified Union School Board will be responsible for oversight and further development of educational programs offered to students.

In its first year of operating schools (2011-2012), the Unified Union School District will continue with the current and proposed curricula that are specified in the current A.N.W.S.U. Curriculum Plan. The curricula offered in the new Unified Union School District will meet all State and Federal legal requirements.

Article #6

The Unified Union School District will assume all capital debt of member school districts for both principal and interest that is owed at the time of the formation of the Unified Union School district. All general operating deficits existing in any and all of the member school districts as of June 30, 2011, will be the responsibility of the corresponding individual towns/cities and not be assumed by the Unified Union School District.

In the event of any operating deficit in any member school district at the end of the fiscal year 2011, such deficit shall be used to determine an increase in the homestead tax rate of that member school district.

Those member districts with an operating deficit at the end of fiscal year 2011 will have, in accordance with state law, an increase in the homestead tax rate in fiscal year 2012 based upon the amount of the operating deficit.

Any and all fund balances resulting from general operating budgets at the end of fiscal year 2011 will be returned to the state's education fund. Those member districts returning funds to the state's education fund will have, in accordance with state law, a decrease in the homestead tax rate in fiscal year 2012 based upon the amount of the returned funds.

Article #7

No later than July 1, 2011 the School Districts of Addison, Ferrisburgh, Panton, Vergennes and Waltham will convey to the Unified Union School District for one dollar each and subject to all encumbrances of record, all of the real estate and personal property owned by them, including all land and buildings.

Notwithstanding the above, and subject to any other requirements for a public vote and voter approval, the Vergennes Incorporated School District specifically reserves the right to convey that portion of its property which is currently utilized as community recreational facilities to the City of Vergennes, provided such conveyance occurs on or before May 1, 2011. If such property is not conveyed to the City of Vergennes on or before said date, it shall be transferred to the Unified Union School District as noted above.

In the event and at such subsequent time as the Unified Union School District Board determines that any of the real estate, including land and buildings, conveyed to it by the School Districts of Addison, Ferrisburgh, Panton, Vergennes and Waltham is unnecessary to the operation of the Unified Union School District and its educational programs, the Board shall convey such property, subject to any requirements for public vote and voter approval, to the town from which said property was originally received for the sum of one dollar, subject to all encumbrances of record.

Article #8

Pursuant to Act 130 of 2004, Unified Union School Districts are funded directly from the Vermont Education Fund and, therefore, allocation of capital and operating expenses is no longer required.

Article #9

Membership on the Unified Union School District Board will be apportioned based on the combined population of all member towns, corresponding to pre-existing school districts, as determined by the year 2000 Federal Census and every ten years thereafter. However, at no time will a town/city corresponding to a pre-existing member school district have less than one board member on the Unified Union School District Board. The number of board members from each member town/city corresponding to a pre-existing school district within the Unified Union School District will be determined by dividing the population of the town or city by one twelfth of the total population of the aggregate population of the city and towns within the Unified Union District. The results of this division shall be rounded to the nearest whole number.

Number of School Board Members by Town/City

Town/City	Board Members
Addison	2
Ferrisburgh	4
Panton	1
Vergennes	4
Waltham	1
Total	12

Article #10

School Board Members will be elected for three-year terms except those initially elected at the time of the formation of the Unified Union School District. In the initial election terms of office will be as follows:

Town/City	1 Year Term	2 Year Term	3 Year Term
Addison		1	1
Ferrisburgh	2	1	1
Panton	1		
Vergennes	1	2	1
Waltham			1

Article #11

The proposal for forming this Unified Union School District will be presented to the voters of each member school district designated as necessary in Article I on March 2, 2010, at which time school board members will also be elected.

Article #12 a

The Unified Union School District shall become operative on July 1, 2011.

The Unified Union School District Board, between July 1, 2010 and June 30, 2011, shall develop school district policies, adopt curriculum and educational programs, prepare for contractual agreements, set the school calendar for Fiscal Year 2012, prepare the budget for Fiscal Year 2012, and prepare for the 2011 Unified Union Annual Meeting.

Article #12 b

The Unified Union School District Board will develop a budget to be presented to voters of the Unified Union School District at its 2011 Annual Meeting. Voting on the annual budget shall be conducted by Australian ballot. The question of whether to vote by Australian ballot shall be placed before the Unified Union School District voters for ratification in accordance with Vermont State Statutes Title 16, Section 711 (e) prior to March 1, 2011.

Article #12 c

On July 1, 2011, each member school district previously a member of the Vergennes Elementary Union School District and the Vergennes Middle/High School Union School District shall withdraw from said union school district pursuant to Title 16, Section 721a(c). Following an affirmative vote on these articles, each such previous member district shall follow the applicable procedures contained in Section 721a.

Article #12 d

The school districts of Addison, Ferrisburgh, Panton, Vergennes and Waltham shall remain in existence after July 1, 2010 for the purpose of completing any business not given to the Unified Union School District under these articles. Such business shall be completed as soon as practicable but in no event any later than June 30, 2011.